

A NEW RECORD FOR SCHIZACHYRIUM SEMITECTUM IN MEXICO

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In December, 1983, Paul S. Martin of the Geosciences Dept. at the University of Arizona, collected a small grass in southern Sonora, Mexico. The plants, which came to us for determination, proved to be Andropogon semitectus Swallen, otherwise known in western Mexico only from a Pringle collection made near Guadalajara, Jalisco, in 1893. The Pringle material was referred to Andropogon malacostachyus Presl [= Schizachyrium malacostachyum (Presl) Nash] by A. S. Hitchcock (Contr. U. S. Nat. Herb. 17: 202. 1913). Recently McVaugh (Flora Novo-Galiciana 14: 352. 1983) has pointed out that the characteristics of the Pringle specimen match much better A. semitectus. McVaugh's treatment is, however, somewhat confusing. Alphabetically among the species of Schizachyrium is listed "Andropogon semitectus Swallen." There is an ample description, but no transfer is made. In fact, it is unclear whether or not the author has accepted it! Following the description, he notes that the taxon may not be sufficiently distinct from Schizachyrium malacostachyum, with which Swallen compared it. Nevertheless, at the end of McVaugh's treatment S. malacostachyum is listed under "doubtful and excluded species."

The Martin collection, the largest plant of which measures 27 cm in height, certainly has the features of Andropogon semitectus, a taxon I am inclined to accept as specifically distinct. It has the long hairs on the adaxial leaf surface, a ligule 0.5 mm or less long, spikelets 5—6 mm long, the pedicellate spikelet (rudiment) is very small, and the pedicel, rachis joint, and 1st glume of the sessile spikelet are densely villous on the lower half. It is clearly a member of the segregate genus Schizachyrium, and since the appropriate combination has not been made, I offer it below:

SCHIZACHYRIUM SEMITECTUM (Swallen) J. Reeder, comb. nov.

Andropogon semitectus Swallen, Contr. U. S. Nat. Herb. 29: 427. 1950. Type: Guatemala, Dept. Zacapa, Standley 73919 (US).

The complete data for the Martin collection are:
Mexico: Sonora, ca. 32 km east of Yaqui Crossing at Tonichi, along new road to Yecora. Growing in hydrothermically altered soil. Elev. 850 m. Coll. Paul S. Martin (sine no.) 20 Dec 1983. The specimen is deposited at ARIZ.